

that vote, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then return to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### DISCHARGE AND REFERRAL OF MEASURE—S. 203

Mr. DOMENICI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Environment and Public Works Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 203, and that the bill then be referred to the Government Affairs Committee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1997

Mr. DOMENICI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today it stand in adjournment until the hour of 11 a.m., Thursday, February 6. I further ask unanimous consent that immediately following the prayer, the routine requests through the morning hour be granted and the Senate then proceed to a period of morning business until the hour of 12 noon with Senators to speak for up to 5 minutes each, except for the following: Senator ROTH, 15 minutes; Senator STEVENS, 10 minutes; Senator DORGAN, 15 minutes; Senator HUTCHISON, 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DOMENICI. Madam President, I further ask unanimous consent that at 12 noon on Thursday the Senate resume consideration of Senate Joint Resolution 1, the constitutional amendment requiring a balanced budget.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DOMENICI. Madam President, I further ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Thursday.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### PROGRAM

Mr. DOMENICI. Madam President, for the information of all Senators, following morning business tomorrow the Senate will resume consideration of the balanced budget constitutional amendment. The leader wishes to remind Senators that amendments will be in order to Senate Joint Resolution 1 during Thursday's session. Therefore, rollcall votes are expected.

Also the majority leader understands that the nomination of Rodney Slater to be Secretary of Transportation was reported today, and another nomination is possible for tomorrow. Therefore, a vote or votes could occur with respect to nominations during Thursday's session of the Senate.

#### ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. DOMENICI. Madam President, if there is no further business to come be-

fore the Senate, I now ask unanimous consent the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order following the remarks of Senator DASCHLE.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DOMENICI. Madam President, I understand the Senator is on his way. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Texas [Mrs. HUTCHISON] is recognized.

#### MILITARY VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1997

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Madam President, today I introduced legislation, along with Senator PHIL GRAMM, called the Military Voting Rights Act of 1997. The bill that was introduced today makes absolutely clear in the law what is already law, because there is nothing against it in the law, and that is that our military personnel have the right to vote at their home base in Federal, State, and local elections.

The law does not say anything against that, but because it does not, there has been a challenge in my home State of Texas to 800 military votes that were, of course, in State and local elections, which are allowed by Texas law.

It is very clear that a person who serves in our military should have the right to vote and the right to citizenship in the State and the localities that he or she chooses to have as their home base. Yet, that right is being challenged. Some 800 military absentee ballots, 150 of which were from overseas, were challenged saying that these people who are serving our country and who are putting their lives on the line to protect our right to vote nevertheless should not have the full voting rights. In fact, the plaintiff sent questionnaires that were in the form of depositions to all of these 800 people who voted, and one woman in Bosnia got a questionnaire to be filled out to determine if she has the right to vote in the State and local elections. We are trying to put a stop to that. We are trying to say very clearly in the Military Voting Rights Act of 1997 that no person will ever be able to be challenged for their full citizenship rights because they have chosen to serve our country, which job, by its very nature, requires moving around the country and outside of the country wherever they are required to go to fulfill the job.

I want to commend our State representative in Texas, Jerry Madden, who is just as incensed as all of us are, for taking the initiative. He is working on a bill now to make it easier for the

military personnel in our State to vote because he, like I, appreciates the fact that these people who have been at a base in Texas have chosen to call Texas home, and he wants to make sure that they can vote in the very easiest way. Perhaps, in fact, we might learn from some of the things that he is doing. He wants to be able to let them have access to Internet voting. He wants to give them some extra leeway in time to vote so that their ballots will have time to get to the State of their residence from a place like Bosnia, or perhaps in Saudi Arabia, or anywhere else in the world where they might be deployed.

I think that it is very important that the sense of the Senate be known here. In fact, 58 Members of the Senate signed a letter to the Attorney General, Janet Reno, asking her to intervene in this case to make sure that our military rights are being protected. All of us who signed that letter are very concerned about the ramifications of this bill. We are concerned that if these people are able to prevail in this case, to say that the military does not have the right to have full citizenship in a State to be able to vote in a State or local election, that perhaps other rights might be challenged. If a person can't have the full rights of the State in which he or she resides and calls home base, then what other laws might not apply? Marriage laws? Could you not get a divorce if you were in the military and you don't have the right to belong in a State? How far are you going to take this?

The fact is there is no question on the merits that the people who are choosing to serve our country and whose job, by its nature, requires that they move every 2 years, or even more frequently, that they should be able to join the home State of their choosing. Frankly, I am proud when the military personnel who serve on Texas bases love our State enough to want to call it home, and we want them to return because we know that the people who lay their lives on the line to make sure that the United States is free are the kind of citizens we want in our State. We want them to know they are welcome. We want them to know they are welcome anywhere else they choose to call home because we appreciate what they do for our country.

So I am pleased to be a cosponsor of this bill. I know that we will have a number of cosponsors, and I think we will pass this bill quite easily, because, as I said, 58 Members are incensed enough to ask the Attorney General to intervene. In fact, I hope the Attorney General will do her duty to represent the Federal employees that are needing help right now so that their rights will be protected—not only the 800 who are being challenged, but all of those that might be affected if this case is allowed to prevail.